

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 212638

FOR AMBASSADOR SCRANTON

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 212638 ACTION USMISSION GENEVA, INFO AMEMBASSY  
JAKARTA, AMCONSUL HONG KONG, AMEMBASSY MANILA, AMEMBASSY KUALA  
LUMPUR, AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE, AMEMBASSY BANGKOK DATED 26 AUG 76.

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 212638

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, ID

SUBJECT: INDOCHINESE BOAT CASES

REF: A. GENEVA 6780; B. JAKARTA 11098; C. JAKARTA 11099;

D. HONG KONG 9932

1. DEPARTMENT FULLY SUPPORTS MISSION'S POSITION (REF. A)  
ON CHOU-LONG BOAT CASE AND SIMILAR INDOCHINESE BOAT CASES  
TURNED AWAY BY COUNTRIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. UNHCR REPS  
OBSERVATION THAT NOTHING HAD HAPPENED THUS FAR TO THOSE  
ABOARD CHOU-LONG SHOWS SHOCKING INSENSITIVITY IN A  
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BODY PRIMARILY CHARGED  
WITH THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEES.

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2. ON THE CONTRARY, OUR CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE THAT A NUMBER OF

UNSEAWORTHY BOATS HAVE BEEN TURNED AWAY BY SEA COUNTRIES OR IGNORED BY COMMERCIAL SHIPPING WHEN IN DISTRESS LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN LOSS OF LIFE DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF AN AGREED UPON HUMANE POLICY FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF THESE REFUGEES.

3. REQUEST AMBASSADOR CALL UPON THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO EXPRESS OUR DEEP CONCERN IN THIS AND SIMILAR CASES. MOST PARTICULARLY, IN CASE OF CHOU-LONG, REPORTEDLY PROPOSED ACTION WOULD CLEARLY LEAD TO EXTREMELY SERIOUS THREAT TO REFUGEES LIVES IF CARRIED OUT.

4. SINCE SUCH ACTIONS WOULD THROW INTO DOUBT CREDIBILITY OF BASIC PREMISE OF EXISTENCE OF UNHCR, DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT IT HAS BECOME APPROPRIATE AND URGENT FOR THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO TAKE A STRONG PERSONAL STAND IN CONDEMNING SUCH ACTIONS. WE BELIEVE HE SHOULD MAKE HIS POSITION CLEAR TO THE INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR AS WELL AS TO THE AMBASSADOR OF OTHER COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM.

5. WE ALSO BELIEVE HIGH COMMISSIONER SHOULD TAKE VIGOROUS ACTION IN FOLLOWING UP WITH COUNTRIES OF TRADITIONAL IMMIGRATION; PERHAPS BY CALLING IN AMBASSADORS OF THESE COUNTRIES, AS WELL, TO SEEK MORE SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO HIS APPEAL. WITHOUT SUCH ADDITIONAL RESPONSES AND THE HOPE THAT THE BURDEN CAN BE MORE EQUALLY SHARED, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT EVEN AN EXTREMELY STRONG POSITION WITH COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM CAN ACHIEVE MORE THAN A TEMPORARY SOLUTION.

6. NEVERTHELESS, THE INCREASING UNWILLINGNESS OF MANY COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM TO COOPERATE FURTHER ON THIS PROBLEM CALLS FOR VIGOROUS ACTION BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER IF TRAGEDY IS TO BE AVERTED WHILE A LONGER TERM AND MORE REGULARIZED SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM IS SOUGHT.

7. WE EXPECT TO PROVIDE OUR THOUGHTS ON THIS LATTER EFFORT AND REACTIONS TO HONG KONG'S THOUGHTFUL MESSAGE (REF. D) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. KISSINGER UNQTE ROBINSON

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